

Message Text

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70

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 AID-05 PC-01 /056 W

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O 012243Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE NIACT 9608

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 1222

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MORG, HO

SUBJECT: HONDURAN MILITARY MEETING ON INTERNAL PROBLEMS

REF: (A) TEGUCIGALPA 1203, (B) TEGUCIGALPA IR 6-841-0333-74

1. SITUATION DESCRIBED REFTEL STILL HAS NOT BEEN FULLY CLARIFIED. CLOSED MEETINGS OF TOP MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE BEEN CONTINUING ALL DAY; THEREFORE USUAL SOURCES ARE NOT AVAILABLE. IT IS APPARENT THAT FURTHER DECISIONS REMAIN TO BE MADE AND THIS MORNING'S PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF MELGAR'S ASCENSION, WHICH ALSO INCLUDED ELIMINATION OF THE THREE RECENTLY CREATED BRIGADE ORGANIZATIONS, MAY BE MERE TIP OF ICEBERG OF A MORE SWEEPING ARMED FORCES REORGANIZATION REACHING TO HIGHEST GOVERNMENTAL LEVELS. AS IN LAST NOVEMBER, DEVELOPMENTS APPEAR TO BE STRICTLY AN IN-HOUSE MILITARY SHOW WITH POLITICAL LEADERS NOT PARTICIPATING.

2. IT IS NOT CLEAR AT THIS TIME EXTENT OF AUTHORITY LOPEZ

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HAS LOST IN REORGANIZATION.

3. REORGANIZATION OF ARMED FORCES BEGINNING FEBRUARY 1 BROUGHT SEVERAL OFFICERS INTO SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL AND INTO COMMAND POSITIONS WHO WERE PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED (REF B) AS REFORMIST ELEMENTS AMONG MIDDLE GRADE OFFICERS. EMBASSY REGARDS IT LIKELY THAT THIS GROUP IS THE IMPETUS BEHIND CURRENT CHANGES. WHILE GROUP IS ACTING IN NAME OF SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL, IT APPEARS THAT NOT ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE CURRENT DELIBERATIONS. THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THESE DELIBERATIONS ARE A CONTINUATION OF THE PROCESS INITIATED LAST NOVEMBER AMONG THE MILITARY.

4. MELGAR IS REGARDED AS LOYAL TO LOPEZ AND IS CONSIDERED PROFESSIONALLY TOUGH AND ABLE. BUT HE IS TAINTED BY CORRUPTION. HIS ELEVATION BY AN ALLEGEDLY REFORMIST GROUP, FIGHTING CORRUPTION AMONG OTHER THINGS, SUGGESTS THAT MELGAR'S APPOINTMENT MAY BE ONLY A TEMPORARY MOVE BY THE DEFENSE COUNCIL TO OBTAIN LOPEZ' ACQUIESCENCE WHAT MAY BE IN A TWO-STEP PROGRAM AIMED ULTIMATELY AT REMOVAL OF LOPEZ FROM DIRECT CONTROL OF THE MILITARY. EXTENT OF MILGAR'S REAL AUTHORITY AS CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES IS NOT CLEAR AT THIS TIME. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT FULL DECISION AND IMPACT OF REORGANIZATION MAY NOT BE KNOWN FOR SEVERAL DAYS.

5. THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS OF IMPENDING ARMED CONFLICT AMONG THE MILITARY AND EMBASSY PERCEIVES NO CLEAR THREAT TO U.S. INTERESTS AT THIS TIME, ASIDE FROM THE INSTABILITY WHICH PRESENT SITUATION REFLECTS.

6. THE CITY IS QUIET AND THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF UNUSUAL TENSION OR MILITARY MOVEMENTS.
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Message Attributes

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